

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

*Mass.* State Planning Board

NOVEMBER 30, 1940



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**STATE PLANNING BOARD**  
11 Beacon Street, November 30, 1940

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives  
in General Court Assembled:

NOV 21 1941

The State Planning Board presents herewith its annual report for the year 1940. In presenting this material ~~the Board does so with~~ full appreciation of the courtesies and cooperation extended to it throughout the present year as in the past. This includes public agencies and officials at all levels of government and from all sections of the country, private individuals and organizations, the press, and particularly the members of its own staff. To all of these the Board extends an expression of its cordial thanks and appreciation.

The activities of the Board during the past year are here presented in the usual functional grouping.

### LAND

The work on the land use survey has been completed for the entire area of the Commonwealth with the exception of the islands and Suffolk County. The survey is not intended to cover these areas. The State Planning Board has now detailed basic information covering land utilization, roads and buildings, soil classification, topography and roads and waterways for 338 municipalities. From this detailed classification of land uses it became possible to prepare a comprehensive map for the entire State indicating specifically the areas devoted to farming, forestry, industrial and residential purposes.

The basic information and classification of various land factors carried out through the land use survey are becoming increasingly useful to planning and action agencies concerned with local and state-wide programs. Of major significance in this respect are town planning boards and rural policy committees which are engaged in developing a program for the best adjustments in local, human and natural resources. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Federal Housing Authority requires a set of the Board's land use maps for the town in which the property is located to be filed with each application for a loan.

### WATER

The year 1940 marked the completion of all field work in connection with the state-wide water resources surveys which have been continued by the Board through the cooperation of the WPA. These water resources studies which, as outlined in previous reports, consist of comprehensive surveys of the various watersheds of the State outlining their principal problems such as flood control, water supply, sewage disposal and recreation, have reached a final phase. During the past year efforts have been concentrated on finishing the gathering of the field data and the preparation of preliminary reports on all the watersheds. All field offices are now closed and, although there is some variation in the degree to which the work is progressing with the various watershed reports, it may be said that the Hoosic, Housatonic, Taunton and Ten Mile, which were held up because of lack of field data, are now completed in manuscript form and are merely awaiting stencilling and mimeographing staff. Field work and preliminary drafts are completed for the reports on the Parker, Ipswich and Mystic, and substantially completed for the Nashua and Concord, with a considerable portion of the Charles, Neponset, French and Quinebaug finished. A new WPA project was set up especially organized to finish the job of writing and preparing for publication the final reports. Emphasis was placed on obtaining several writers and civil engineers to correlate the results of the field work and prepare the final reports under the supervision of the Board's staff. The completion of the above studies together with the reports already published, i.e., Blackstone, Connecticut, Farmington, Millers, Deerfield, Westfield and Chicopee will afford a comprehensive picture of the river basin situation in this Commonwealth, upon which to base general conclusions and policies.

### POWER

Brief studies of existing and potential power development have been carried out on the various streams of the Commonwealth under the water resources projects. These surveys usually consist of a complete inventory of existing power, together with a statement of principal opportunities for the develop-



ment of potential power. These, of course, except for a few large sites already held by utility companies for future development, are of relatively small importance.

## INDUSTRY

During the past year our Industrial Division completed the supervision of the WPA project under which were tabulated the value and quantity of merchandise imports and exports passing through Massachusetts customs offices, itemized according to individual products, by countries of origin or destination.

A preliminary report was issued in May, 1940, giving basic statistics of Massachusetts foreign trade. A final report, issued in October, 1940, gave the detailed compilation of the project in terms of value, and a reference file was set up, making available the corresponding data in physical volume whenever the volume figures are needed.

Reference work in answer to inquiries from business concerns and associations has made up an increasing part of the division's service. Since such research frequently uncovers material of general as well as individual interest, it becomes doubly useful.

To keep the public informed as to the current trend of business in Massachusetts specifically, the State Planning Board index of industrial activity is published each month. It includes as component factors the index of industrial employment issued by the Department of Labor and Industries, the floor area of new building construction, consumption of electric current, pairs of shoes manufactured and cotton textile mill activity. Although simple in construction and limited in number of series, the index so far has given a rather accurate picture of the changes in industrial activity, and serves in a general way as a reflector of the entire business of the State.

With the same purpose of interesting the people of the Commonwealth in their own State, the staff also issues each week a page of miscellaneous facts entitled "Do You Know Massachusetts" which is regularly published by about fifty local newspapers.

## RECREATION

One of the major activities of the Board was the continued cooperation with the National Park Service in the preparation of the Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Study for Massachusetts. This report has been completed and reviewed by the Metropolitan District Commission, the Department of Conservation and the Department of Public Works. It will be printed and distributed following a final editing by the Board. The report presents much of the information on existing recreational areas and facilities compiled for the National Park Service in 1938 and is an expansion of the recreation section of the Board's 1936 Progress Report.

As in previous years, the Board assisted the Massachusetts Development and Industrial Commission in its recreational promotional work by compiling maps and other material. The descriptive data on winter sports was revised and brought up to date for re-distribution. Also the Board analyzed for the Commission questionnaires on hotel, overnight camps and saltwater fishing income during 1939.

The Board, after study, endorsed the projected gift to the Trustees of Public Reservations of Crane's Beach, Castle Neck, Ipswich and adjacent marshlands as being in the interest of public recreation. This area had not previously been designated on the Board's plan as a future park or reservation, but it was felt that the opportunity to obtain a notable scenic and recreational area for quasi-public use should not be overlooked.

The Board, after study, also endorsed the Bay Circuit plan of the Trustees of Public Reservations. The details of this approval will be found in the section of the report devoted to Cooperation.

During the year, the staff answered many requests for recreational information from various individuals, agencies and other State departments. The Chairman and members of the staff participated in several conferences devoted to recreational problems.

The Board designed and prepared a "Massachusetts Tourists Map" which was printed in three colors and distributed in considerable numbers by the Massachusetts Development and Industrial Commission. The map indicated the location of the fourteen tourways or pleasureways as determined by the Tourway



Plan previously prepared by the Board. In addition, it showed all important public and quasi-public recreational areas, facilities for camping, picnicking and swimming, and points of scenic and historic interest in the State. On the reverse side was given a description of the pleasure routes and interesting data on the recreational areas and facilities.

Pleasureway P-8, extending from Concord to North Adams was selected as a trial route and was marked along the highway for its complete length with identification signs. These were in the form of outline maps of the State, bearing the designation "P-8". The markers were designed by the Board and erected by the Department of Public Works. It is anticipated that three other routes will be similarly marked in 1941.

## TRANSPORT

The work of the Board during 1940 in the field of transportation was confined principally to highways and air transport. During the year the Board has given much thought and study to the highway needs in the Commonwealth with consideration to State highways and also to the secondary roads. In the past the highways have been looked upon principally as arteries of travel for peacetime requirements; trucking, business, pleasure and recreational. Now they must be considered from a national defense aspect. Fortunately in Massachusetts the needs for defense highways coincide very closely with the existing main arteries of travel and this means improving roads already constructed rather than constructing new facilities.

The Board is again filing legislation to permit the laying out of limited access ways which can be constructed to carry traffic speedily and safely by avoiding grade crossings, dangerous intersections and marginal collisions. The Board has also studied the problems arising from traffic congestion in and near cities, and the question of by-passes and overhead viaducts, and is convinced of the need of such improvements in certain cases, if the efficiency of the cities and the values of municipal real estate are to be maintained or restored.

Further study has been given to the Stockbridge by-pass in cooperation with the Department of Public Works, and surveys have been made. Construction of Route 102 from Route 20 at East Lee to the new State highway in West Stockbridge, is included in the tentative six-year State highway program.

The Board has cooperated with the Department of Public Works in the preparation of a tentative long-range program of highway construction to be carried out over a period of six years. It is a comprehensive plan, benefiting all parts of the Commonwealth. When completed the efficiency of our highway network will be greatly increased, not only from the viewpoint of defense transport but also considered in the light of peace time necessity after the war crisis has passed.

The Board has cooperated with the Massachusetts Commission on Aeronautics in studying aerial problems as they affect Massachusetts and in the preparation of maps and data. This included a careful study of the East Boston Airport which took into consideration the construction of new bulkheads to retain the material dredged from the proposed sea plane basin and channel. It is generally conceded that the East Boston Airport should be expanded to such a degree that it may be made a class 4 airport. There are already in the Commonwealth about 52 airports and landing fields, which is a substantial distribution for a State as small as Massachusetts, but many of these are inadequate, and there is need for many more emergency landing fields and for flying fields for student's training.

## PUBLIC WORKS

As indicated in the later section of this report devoted to Cooperation, with the beginning of the Federal Government's fiscal year on July 1st, consulting assistance given to all state planning boards was confined to the preparation of public works programs. The matter has been the subject of constant study by the Board during 1940. Civic minded associations and individuals interested in the matter have been consulted. Conferences have been held with His Excellency, the Governor, at which the Board was authorized to proceed with the preparation of a long-term or six-year program of public works. Further conferences have been held with the Chairman of the Commission on Administration and Finance and with the Budget Commissioner. Estimates for capital expendi-



tures are now being secured from department heads throughout the State service and it is hoped that it will be possible for the Board to submit to the Governor for use during the 1941 session of the Legislature a six-year program of public works expenditures for the State.

That sentiment in favor of public works programming is fast becoming crystallized throughout the State is evidenced by the number of municipalities that are either studying the matter or have definitely recommended that municipal expenditures be made on such a basis.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING

During the year 1940, the Board continued its active planning advisory program. Consultations were held, and advice and encouragement given to all communities whether or not they had official planning boards or zoning committees. This planning promotion has been carried on through the media of office interviews, addresses to civic organizations interested in community development, meetings with local planning boards and committees, and participation in planning conferences.

The increased number of requests for information and advice on planning and zoning matters (about four hundred in all during the year) indicates a growing appreciation of the necessity of comprehensive planning and zoning. During the course of the year this office has had specific requests from one hundred eleven cities and towns, or about 32% of the total number in the State. Of these, ninety-five communities had established planning boards and sixteen had not.

Most of these requests were for general planning information; some, particularly those concerning zoning matters, required special work and study on the part of the staff. Assistance was rendered to several communities in the preparation or revision of zoning laws. A large number of requests were received for an interpretation of the State Zoning Enabling Act, and opinions were rendered in so far as possible. Several analyses were made of particular zoning problems. For the assistance of planning boards operating under Chapter 211 of the Acts of 1936, a series of planning studies and a master plan map were made of a hypothetical community and exhibited at various conferences and in the office.

The section of the reference library of the Board containing information on local planning and zoning has been continuously expanded. The information in this library is available to, and has been used by, members of local planning boards and others. An effort has been made on the part of the staff to complete the files of zoning bylaws and ordinances, and to collect from as many communities as possible copies of local building codes, subdivision regulations and zoning forms.

The staff has assisted in the establishment and organization of several new planning boards by addressing local civic meetings, and by interpreting Chapter 211 to special committees considering the establishment of such boards.

During the past year the Board has cooperated with the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards in arranging three regional conferences and one State-wide conference on planning. The Chairman, members of the Board, the consultants and the staff have participated in these conferences.

The first of these, the Bristol County Conference, was held in Taunton on February 14, 1940, and was devoted to a consideration of planning problems and procedure and billboard regulation. The second was held on April 13, 1940 in Danvers, Essex County, and dealt with local planning and zoning problems, town forests and industry. The Cape Cod conference, the third in the series, was held in Osterville, June 24, 1940 and was devoted to problems peculiar to the Cape. The 27th Annual Meeting of the Federation of Planning Boards was held in Stockbridge on October 4 and 5. The main topics of discussion were county and local planning, public relations in planning, and transportation.

The Chairman has participated in other conferences of a planning nature, particularly the first New England Regional Planning Conference held in Boston on May 10, 1940.

## REGIONAL PLANNING

### Worcester County Tentative Plan

The study which reached the stage of a printed report during the past year, entitled "Worcester County Tentative Plan" had its inception in a suggestion offered by the National Resources Planning Board and endorsed by His Excel-



lency, the Governor, that the Board with the assistance of Federal consultants and others endeavor to formulate a long range program for the economic rehabilitation of the people and the local governments in the hill towns of Massachusetts. As a working unit readily adaptable to the immediate purpose, the County of Worcester was chosen with its four cities and fifty-six towns, a total area of 1565 square miles and a total population of 495,562 persons.

The approach to the study was through the medium of the six main functional categories: land use, water, recreation, industry, transport and governmental relations. From the intensive consideration of these functions in their particular application to Worcester County, certain definite conclusions emerged which were grouped into what was characterized by Arthur C. Comey, Consultant, as a "Primary Plan for the Rural Towns." In addition to its own studies, the Board was privileged to include in the report, through the courtesy of Morris B. Lambie, Professor of Government, Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, a series of profiles indicating the fiscal abilities of six of the Worcester County communities as compared with all cities and towns of Massachusetts.

## DEFENSE

The Board has in its preliminary stages at the present time a comprehensive survey of seven areas in the State in which it is anticipated that there will be greatly increased industrial activity due to defense enterprises. The survey would include studies of housing facilities, recreational facilities, traffic facilities and availability of skilled labor. Such a survey would be coordinated with the work of the Governor's Committee on Public Safety.

Members of the Board and of the staff are represented on the Advisory Committee on National Defense Training, and on sub-committees working for preparedness and civilian protection.

All of the many maps and material assembled by the Board, including its land use maps, its studies of various river basins, and its business and economic studies, have been placed at the disposal of the defense authorities.

## A PLANNING FORUM

For the benefit of local planning groups throughout the State, the Board has continued its periodic publication, "A Planning Forum", devoted to matters of technical and timely interest. Four issues were distributed throughout the year. The leading subjects for discussion in each were as follows:

*Vol. IV No. 1—Jan.-Feb.*

Master Plan vs. Official Map

Recent Zoning Decisions and Opinions

*Vol. IV No. 2—Mar.-Apr.*

Proceedings of Essex County Regional Planning Meeting

Problem of the Large Frame House

*Vol. IV No. 3—May-June*

Personnel Issue—Membership, Activities, Organization and Status of 155

Local Planning Boards

*Vol. IV No. 4—Oct.-Nov.*

Factual Analysis of Municipal Planning Acts in Massachusetts

## COOPERATION

The Federal Government through the National Resources Planning Board furnished the part-time services of a consultant and an associate consultant for the first half of the fiscal year. At the end of that time, due to a change in policies, consulting services, other than for public works programming, were discontinued. Through the cooperation of the Massachusetts State College, the services of the associate consultant were continued for a limited time in order to complete the land use maps for the entire State. A consultant delegated to the study of public works programming was assigned to the Board from July 1st to the end of the fiscal year.

The Board met with the representatives of the Trustees of Public Reservations and considered the Bay Circuit plan as proposed by it, providing for a series of reservations encircling the Metropolitan Boston region. Based upon a report submitted by its staff after a thorough study of the matter, the Board voted to endorse the Bay Circuit Plan and recommend that, when warranted by circumstances and to such extent as may be found feasible and necessary, the



Commonwealth cooperate with other agencies, public and private, in carrying forward the project to its ultimate conclusion.

The Chairman continues to serve as the Board's representative on the New England Regional Planning Commission, and Frederic H. Fay continues as a member-at-large. The Chairman and the Chief Planning Engineer are members of the Drainage Basin Committee of the New England Regional Planning Commission.

A detailed study of population trends was undertaken in connection with the report prepared by the Massachusetts Taxpayers' Association for the Special Commission on State Teachers Colleges.

The Board has been represented on the Mayor's Conference on Traffic of the city of Boston. The Chairman and Frederic H. Fay served on the sub-committee on Projects and General Richard K. Hale and the Chief Planning Engineer served on the sub-committee on Finance. It is expected that these committees will shortly present their reports and recommendations.

The Chairman serves as a member of the Massachusetts Commission on Interstate Cooperation, as provided by legislative act.

By appointment of the Governor, the Chairman served as a member of the Special Commission on Functions and Activities Affecting Cities and Towns of the Metropolitan Districts. This Commission was created by chapter 71 of the Resolves of 1938. It made a report of progress to the Legislature of 1939. In this report the Commission asked for a continuance of its existence until December 1, 1940. It also made one recommendation for enactment of legislation to correct an inequity in existing law. This recommendation was enacted into law, Chapter 429, Acts of 1939. This act redefined the term "boulevard" and authorized the State to pay from the Highway Fund the entire cost of the maintenance of parkways of the Metropolitan District. This was felt by the Commission to be a necessity due to the change in the character of use of Metropolitan boulevards. On behalf of the Commission, the Board sponsored a WPA project with the co-sponsorship of the Metropolitan District Commission and the Boston City Planning Board. Under this project a survey was made of the Boston Metropolitan District and adjacent areas. The details of this survey are discussed in the section of this report devoted to WPA activities. The Commission will make its final report to the Legislature of 1941.

The Board has continued to be represented by its Chairman on the Massachusetts Rural Policy Committee. This Committee is made up of Federal and State agencies engaged in a cooperative effort to meet agricultural problems. The Committee has set up county rural policy committees which, in turn, have set up town rural policy committees. The Board's land use maps are used entirely as the basis of their work.

In addition to various specific instances of cooperation which are covered in other sections of this report, the Board has cooperated continually with private organizations and officials by supplying basic data, by furnishing speakers for meetings and by providing material for exhibition.

## HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters of the Board were moved late in November, 1939 from Room 24 to Room 207 State House. As we go to press, the Board has been notified that a second move is necessary in order to meet the requirements of defense activities and to provide additional hearing room space for legislative committee work. The removal of the State Planning Board to 11 Beacon Street is accordingly contemplated soon after the first of the year.

## WORKS PROJECT ADMINISTRATION COOPERATION

Through the cooperation of the Federal Government, the WPA projects discussed herewith have been operated under the sponsorship of the Board.

*Land Utilization Studies*—This project, or a continuation of it, has been in operation practically since the inception of the Board's activities. Under it complete surveys have been made of 338 municipalities in the State. A detailed report may be found in the Land section of the report. Work under this project was completed on September 27, 1940.

*Water Resources Studies*—This project, or a continuation of it, has been in operation during the entire existence of the Board. Its purpose is to conduct field surveys, gather field data, correlate existing data and prepare reports on



the status of water resources in all municipalities and counties of the State, for the purpose of planning for the improvement of existing conditions. A detailed report on the activities of this project may be found in the water section of the report.

*Exports and Imports*—Operation under this project was commenced in September, 1939. It provided for the assembly, tabulation and correlation of data on exports and imports of the Customs District of Massachusetts by countries of origin and destination by individual commodities for the years 1937, 1938 and 1939. Further details with regard to this project may be found in the Industry section of this report.

## SURVEY OF BOSTON METROPOLITAN DISTRICT AND ADJACENT AREAS

On June 10, 1940 the Board transmitted to the Special Legislative Commission on Functions and Activities affecting the Cities and Towns within the Several Metropolitan Districts a report incorporating the results of a survey made for the Commission under WPA Project No. 18151. The Board assumed the sponsorship of this project, the purpose of which was to collect, correlate and analyze information concerning the Boston Metropolitan area that would provide a factual basis on which to determine the equitable apportionment of cost of highways, parkways and other recreational features, and of water and sewer services, among the cities and towns thereof and the State. Acting as co-sponsors were the Metropolitan District Commission and the Boston City Planning Board. The entire financial responsibility was assumed by the city of Boston.

## COOPERATION WITH FEDERAL FUNDS

The following is a statement of expenditures, with the dates of initiation and termination, on the projects sponsored by the Board during 1940, with the exception of the Survey of Boston Metropolitan District and Adjacent Areas, on which no responsibility was assumed:

<i>Project</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Federal Funds</i>	<i>State Funds</i>	<i>Total</i>
Land Utilization . . . . .	20677	\$19,532.00	\$8,797.13	\$28,329.13
Water Resources . . . . .	21197	23,211.00	5,112.74	28,323.74
Exports and Imports . . . . .	20291	19,776.00	2,842.43	22,618.43

## MAPS AND CHARTS

A detailed list and a classification of maps and charts added to the Board's file during the year are available at the office of the Board. From the sale of land use maps and other material, the Board has received during the year a total of \$212.42.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The following is a statement of appropriations and expenditures during 1940. In this connection it should be noted that the balance of approximately \$2000 in the Personal Service appropriation was made possible through an adjustment in salary schedules. The balance in expenses was achieved as the result of a special effort made in response to a special executive appeal for the conservation of funds within departmental appropriations.

	<i>Appropriation</i>	<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Personal Services . . . . .	\$33,400.00	\$31,397.40	\$2,002.60
Expenses . . . . .	8,868.94	7,187.00	1,681.96
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	\$42,268.94	\$38,584.40	\$3,684.56

Financial Statement Verified

WALTER S. MORGAN,  
Comptroller

*Respectfully submitted,*

STATE PLANNING BOARD, by

ELISABETH M. HERLIHY  
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